

Objective: Adolescent sexual activity: By 2010, 30 percent or less of Wisconsin high school youth will report ever having had sexual intercourse.

Additional Resources

Kirby, D. (2001) Emerging Answers--Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy. Washington, DC: National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.

This report reviews organized programs intended to reduce teen pregnancy. Programs included in this report meet the following criteria: (1) Completed in 1980 or later; (2) Conducted in the US or Canada; (3) Targeted at adolescents in middle or high school; (4) Employed an experimental or quasi-experimental design; (5) Had a sample size of at least 100 in the combined treatment and control groups; and (6) Measured impact on sexual or contraceptive behavior, pregnancy, or childbearing.

The report groups research findings into three main categories:

(A) Programs that focus on sexual antecedents.

These programs delay the onset of sex, reduce the frequency of sex, reduce the number of sexual partners among teens or increase the use of condoms and other forms of contraception. There are four sub-groups of these programs: curricula-based programs, sex and HIV education programs for parents and families, programs designed to improve access to condoms or other contraceptives, and community-wide initiatives with many components. There are 10 characteristics of these programs; for example, they focus on reducing one or more sexual behaviors that lead to unintended pregnancy (or HIV/STD) and include activities that address social pressures that influence sexual behavior.

(B) Programs that focus on non-sexual behaviors.

These programs focus on the broader context of teen pregnancy: disadvantaged families and communities; detachment from school, work and social institutions; lack of role models. There are two sub-groups of these programs: early childhood programs and youth development programs for adolescents. The latter sub-group is divided into service learning programs, vocational education programs, and other youth development programs.

(C) Programs with both sexuality and youth development components.

These programs address reproductive health and youth development simultaneously.

Dr. Kirby is a senior researcher at ETR Associates, a non-profit organization that developed two programs: Reducing the Risk (Sufficient Evidence for Effectiveness) and Safer Choices (Sufficient Evidence for Ineffectiveness).